United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement, again calls on parties to conflict in Liberia to implement various ECOWAS peace accords; says Yamoussoukro Accord of last October offers best possible framework for peaceful resolution of conflict.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Vladimir Petrovsky, travels to Libya carrying message to Colonel Muammar Qaddafi.

+ Finnish monitor of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia is wounded in Mostar; Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, continues meetings in Belgrade.

+ Gap between rich and poor is widening, environmental degradation is increasing and malnutrition is on the rise, according to new report by United Nations Environment Programme.

+ World Food Programme says slow response to food aid appeal could spell disaster for Horn of Africa.

+ Narcotics Control Board opens fifty-second session at Vienna.

+ Four United Nations Agencies draw attention to maternal deaths in developing world in ceremony -- "Flowers for mothers" -- at Headquarters tomorrow, 8 May.

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The Security Council this morning renewed its call to all parties to the conflict in Liberia to respect and implement the various accords of the peace process in the framework of the Committee of Five of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including refraining from actions which endanger the security of neighbouring States.

In a statement read out at the Council meeting by President Peter Hohenfellner (Austria), the Council, commending ECOWAS for its untiring efforts to end the conflict in Liberia, said the Yamoussoukro Accord of 30

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October 1991 offered the best possible framework for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Liberia by creating the necessary conditions for free and fair elections in that country. The Accord calls for the immediate encampment and disarmament of combatants and for the holding of democratic elections in Liberia.

Members of the Council also commended the efforts of the Member States, the Secretary-General and the humanitarian organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of the civil war in Liberia and reaffirmed their support for increased assistance.

For its deliberations, the Council had before it the text of the final communiqué of the meeting of the ECOWAS' Committee of Five held at Geneva on 6 and 7 April. According to the communiqué, transmitted in a letter dated 30 April from the Permanent Representative of Senegal, in his country's capacity as Chairman of ECOWAS, the Consultative Group noted positive developments in the situation in Liberia, such as the appointment of the members of the Interim Elections Commission and the ad hoc Supreme Court, as well as the completion of reconnaissance visits by the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). However, many other important aspects of the Accord had remained unimplemented, particularly those relating to the establishment of a buffer zone along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border, and the encampment and disarmament of all combatants.

The Council last took up the question of Liberia on 22 January 1991, when, in a Presidential statement, it called on the parties to the conflict in that country to continue to respect the cease-fire agreement, and to cooperate fully with the efforts of ECOWAS to restore peace and normalcy in Liberia. It had also supported the appeal launched by ECOWAS for increased humanitarian assistance to the people of Liberia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has asked the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Vladimir Petrovsky, to travel to Libya carrying a message to the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, a United Nations spokesman said today.

The trip is in the framework of the Secretary-General's mandate under the Security Council's resolutions 731 (1992) of 20 January and resolution 748 (1992) of 31 March. Under resolution 748, the Council had set a 15 April deadline for Libya to comply with resolution 731 requesting its cooperation in establishing responsibility for the downing of Pan Am flight 103 and UTA flight 772. The sanctions imposed under resolution 748 include an air and arms embargo, as well as limitations on diplomatic staff at Libyan diplomatic missions and consular posts abroad.

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A United Nations spokesman told correspondents today that a Finnish monitor of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) had

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been wounded when caught in a mortar and artillery fire in a United Nations building in Mostar, south of Sarajevo.

According to the spokesman, the monitor was caught in the cross-fire and UNPROFOR had not been the target of this attack. His condition this morning was described as stable.

Meanwhile, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, was continuing his meetings today in Belgrade with various officials on the question of the feasibility of a United Nations peace-keeping force in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Yesterday, Mr. Goulding met with the Serbian Party leader from Bosnia-Herzegovina, and today he was scheduled to meet with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and the Deputy Secretary of Defence. He would also meet with officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Mr. Goulding was due back in New York over the weekend following a visit to Zagreb.

In a related development, the European Community has said that it would not accept continuation by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the "State, international legal and political personality of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia", as declared by Serbia and Montenegro on 27 April. The Community said in a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 5 May, that this declaration by the two Republics raised questions regarding the continuity of Yugoslavia's membership of international organizations, including the United Nations, and that it could not accept "the automatic continuity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international organizations, including the United Nation".

The letter was signed by the Portugese Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Fernando Reino.

Also, the Community has informed the United Nations that it has recognized Macedonia as an independent and sovereign State "within its existing borders and under a name that can be accepted by all parties concerned". This was transmitted in a letter, dated 5 May, to the Council President by the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.
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According to a report released today by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) entitled "The State of The World Environment", the gap between rich and poor is widening, environmental degradation is increasing and malnutrition is on the rise.

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The report was released as United Nations negotiators are meeting in New York to consider a treaty to limit the emissions of carbon dioxides and other so-called greenhouse gases that could lead to global warming and disruption of the Earth's climate.. The negotiations are intended to produce an agreement that can be signed in June at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Dr. Mustafa Tolba, the Executive Director of the Environment Programme, disclosed the findings of the report at a press conference at United Nations Headquarters this afternoon saying that "unless the international community sets targets soon, the situation concerning the environment is going to continue to get worse".

The report says among other things that the world's population will climb 1.7 billion in the next 20 years; that 90 per cent of the births will occurr in developing countries where 1.1 billion people already live in poverty; and that by the year 2000, the ozone layer is expected to be depleted by as much as 10 percent during the summer in temperate regions.

Dr. Tolba urged Governments and world leaders to take a "good hard look at the reports findings", before traveling next month to Rio.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) warned today that unless more emergency food aid pledges were forthcoming and food began to arrive quickly, million of people in the Horn of Africa risked malnutrition and death.

According to a press release issued at Headquarters today, Catherine Bertini, the Executive Director of WFP, said the situation in almost every country of the Horn of Africa was critical. Pledges of food and its delivery had been slow and "even non-existent" in some cases, she said. To date, less than half the food needed to reach the approximately 20 million people at risk in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan had been pledged. Only 15 per cent of what is needed had arrived in the region.

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Action to ensure that Governments implement the international drug control treaties in an effective manner is currently being discussed by the International Narcotics Control Board at its fifty-second session, which opened in Vienna on Monday, 4 May.

Those treaties are the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

During its two-week session, which will conclude on 15 May, the Board will devote considerable attention to the supervision of licit commerce in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and the chemicals used to manufacture drugs, to assist Governments prevent their diversion into illicit channels. It

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will also make recommendations to the international drug control system for action.

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Four United Nations Agencies, The United Nations Development Programme(UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA), The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), have joined the International Planned Parenthood Federation to help draw attention to the tragedy of maternal deaths in the developing world, and generate support for its prevention.

In a ceremony entitled "Flowers For Mothers", planned for tomorrow, Friday 8 May, the group will remember the 500,000 women who die each year from pregnancy and childbirth with 500,000 carnations -- one for each of those women -- on the North lawn at the United Nations. According to a press release issued at Headquarters, "Flowers for Mothers" aims to focus the world's attention on the critical role of family planning to women's health. In many cases , the release said, it can mean the difference between life and death for women and children in the developing world. A number of legislators, celebrities and supporters are expected to participate in the ceremony.

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